



This Giving Tuesday, Avoid Charity Scams

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MADISON, Wis. – The holidays are often marked with generosity and charitable giving. After the shopping sprees of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday on November 29 is an occasion that encourages people to give to those in need. This Giving Tuesday, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) and the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) are offering tips to help you ensure your donations reach charitable organizations and not scammers.

“Scammers can take advantage of your goodwill in an effort to steal your money and personal information,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “Consumers can take a few simple but effective measures to verify a charitable organization is legitimate before they donate.”

“With a little research and a few precautions, you can help ensure your charitable gift will be used as intended by an organization that is genuinely serving others,” said DFI Secretary-designee Cheryll Olson-Collins. “Don’t feel pressured by emotional appeals or urgent requests for donations. A reputable charitable organization will appreciate your donation just as much if you take time to research the donation first before giving.”

DATCP and DFI offer the following giving tips to prospective donors:

- **If you are solicited for donations**, ask for the name, address, and phone number of the charitable organization making the request.
- **Do not make a payment over the phone.** Hang up and do additional research first.
- **Do not click on links or attachments** in emails, text messages, or social media posts, and do not share information with senders you do not know.
- **Do not donate via cash, cryptocurrency, peer-to-peer payment apps, or by wire** to people or organizations you do not know. It is impossible to reverse these transactions.
- **Do not write a check or give cash to an individual solicitor.** Always write out checks to the name of the organization or use a credit card.
- **Watch for imposter websites and social media profiles.** Check the spelling of the charitable organization’s name on the account and website – misspelled names may signify scams.
- **Ask how your donation will be used** and what percentage of your donation will be used for program services (also referred to as the organization’s charitable purpose) rather than for administrative, management, or fundraising costs.

To learn more about a charitable organization, use resources like Give.org or CharityNavigator.org. To check if a charitable organization or professional fundraiser is registered with the DFI, visit wdfi.org/CharitableOrganizations, email DFICharitableOrgs@dfi.wisconsin.gov, or call (608) 267-1711.

For additional information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov. If you have questions or believe you are a victim of a scam, report it by contacting DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline by phone at (800) 422-7128 or email at DATCPHotline@wi.gov.

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